

GHOST IN THE SHELL
MAN-MACHINE INTERFACE

攻殻機動隊

ISSUE 2 OF 11

STORY AND ART BY
MASAMUNE SHIROW

TRANSLATION BY
FREDERIK L. SCHODT AND TOREN SMITH

この物語に登場する
様々な設定や解説や概
念は全て妄想の産物で
あり、現実とは無関係
の娯楽物です。服用を
誤る事無くお楽しみ頂
ければ幸いです。
またデッチ上げやギミ
ックの「誤用」による
二次被害には当方責任
を負いかねます点を御
了承願います。

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OPEN

MAN-MACHINE INTERFACE CONTROL PREFERENCES



WARNING: READ ME FIRST!

Readers may note that certain panels seem to have been inadvertently left unreversed or have incongruous backwards lettering. These were artistic decisions made by Mr. Shirow during the production of the mirror-imaged foreign edition of *Man-Machine Interface*. — Dark Horse Comics and Studio Proteus

The various situations, explanations, and concepts that appear in this book are a product of my wild imagination, a form of entertainment with no connection to reality. Take according to directions, and enjoy. Be advised that the author assumes no responsibility for any collateral damage resulting from improper use of the various constructs, fabrications, and gimmicks in the story.

APOLOGIES AND CORRECTIONS

In the *Ghost in the Shell* graphic novel published in 1991, the heroine, Motoko Kusanagi, fused with a self-described "intelligent life-form" and left Section 9 of the Public Security Bureau. This story takes place approximately four years and five months later. As a result, this story is quite different from what was originally called *Ghost in the Shell* and featured Public Security's Section 9 (the Special Assault Force). I thought of visually differentiating the new Japanese title from the old one by merely changing the last kanji character, from one that means "military unit" to the homophonic kanji for "body" or "form" (which would shift the meaning of "mobile force" or "riot squad" to something like "mobile-unit-body-entity"), but for a variety of reasons I decided not to do so. To those readers expecting a direct continuation of the prior storyline, I apologize and beg for your understanding. I'm sorry, folks!

— Masamune Shirow

Send comments to:

Interface
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Milwaukie OR 97222 USA

interface@darkhorse.com

CIRCUITWEAPON

03



2035.03.06.AM08:12

I'M SENDING IMAGES OF THE COMPANY FROM THE PROBES. CAN YOU SEE THEM?

LOOKS GOOD. KEEP IT UP.

INSIDE MEDITECH: A CORPORATE CLONE-ORGAN FARM (PART OF THE POSEIDON INDUSTRIAL GROUP) IN THE REPUBLIC OF EAST MONNABIA.

I'M SENDING IMAGES OF THE COMPANY FROM THE PROBES. CAN YOU SEE THEM?

LOOKS GOOD. KEEP IT UP.

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INSIDE MEDITECH: A CORPORATE CLONE-ORGAN FARM (PART OF THE POSEIDON INDUSTRIAL GROUP) IN THE REPUBLIC OF EAST MONNABIA.

I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T SAY THIS, BUT EVEN AT THIS DISTANCE I'M GETTING A WHIFF OF ROASTED PORK...

SHIT! IT'S THOSE BASTARDS FROM THE HUMAN LIBERATION FRONT...!

IT'S A MIRACLE WE HAVEN'T HAD ANY FATALITIES AMONG THE LOCAL STAFF.

NO, IT'S NOT A MIRACLE...

...IT'S BECAUSE ARAMAKI HERE DID SUCH A GOOD JOB FOR US.

BUT I THOUGHT WE'D REACHED A SETTLEMENT WITH THE HLF...?

CLEARLY IT WAS SCRAPPED!

WE'VE ALREADY STARTED OUR ANTI-HLF PR CAMPAIGN WITH MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING SHOWING CHILDREN WAITING FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANTS.

GRR!

MAY THE LORD PUNISH THEM...

YOU SURE IT'S NOT SOME SORT OF SABOTAGE BY THE CLONE TEAM?

THAT THE ONLY THING YOU CAN THINK UP?

The technology exists to manufacture human organs without using donor pigs, but for safety reasons Poseidon Industrial has chosen to use genetic material taken from its customers while they're young and healthy, rather than growing organs from cells taken from them when they're older and sick. There's always the "programmed cellular death" problem (apoptosis), but we won't get into that here.



WE'LL ALLOW THE LOCAL POLICE ONTO THE SCENE IN APPROXIMATELY SIX HOURS. WE'LL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THE FACILITIES AT OUR NEXT MEETING.

ANYTHING WE SHOULD LOOK INTO BEFORE THEN?



WE'RE GOING TO SUBMIT, FOR YOUR RECONSIDERATION, OUR PROPOSAL TO MOVE MEDITECH TO AN AS-YET UNZONED SECTOR IN PEGASUS, THE FLOATING CITY CURRENTLY BEING BUILT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

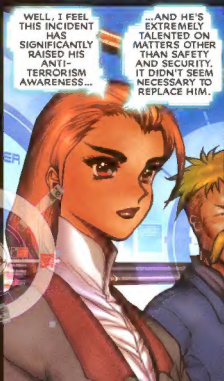
I HAVE TO WARN YOU, THOUGH, THAT THE PLAN DIFFERS IN SEVERAL DETAILS FROM WHAT WE SUBMITTED PREVIOUSLY.



I SEE YOUNG LEBRIS IS BEING KEPT ON AS SUPERINTENDENT, YES?



WELL, I FEEL THIS INCIDENT HAS SIGNIFICANTLY RAISED HIS ANTI-TERRORISM AWARENESS...



...AND HE'S EXTREMELY TALENTED ON MATTERS OTHER THAN SAFETY AND SECURITY. IT DIDN'T SEEM NECESSARY TO REPLACE HIM.



YOU'RE TOO NAÏVE, ARAMAKI! WHO'S GOING TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, EH?

THERE'S NO SENSE ARGUING ABOUT THAT IF WE CAN'T RECOVER FROM THE CURRENT SITUATION OR MAKE GOOD OUR LOSSES. MATTERS WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF THERE WAS MALICE INVOLVED.

AND THE FIGS ARE CLEAR.

"DIFFERENT"...?

YOU'D LIKE IT.

WELL, IF THERE ARE NO OTHER ITEMS...THE NEXT MEETING IS IN THIRTY MINUTES.

DISMISSED!

ARAMAKI, THE TEAM HANDLING THE REPUBLIC OF EASTERN MONNABIA'S WAITING FOR YOU.

I'LL BE FIVE MINUTES LATE....

AM I SUPPOSED TO BE GRATEFUL...?

I THINK YOU AND VINCHAWAN, THE PEGASUS SUPERINTENDENT, OUGHT TO GET ALONG PRETTY WELL.

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, CONTACT MY SECRETARY. NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...



AIRSHIP! HAS
THAT PROBE
CEBOT WITH
THE CX
MANIPULATORS
ARRIVED AT
SECTOR 12-B
YET?

TWO
MINUTES
AGO.

IT'S IN AN
AREA WITH
LITTLE
DAMAGE
FROM
EXPLOSIVES.

MAKE
SURE TO
CHECK
THE MAIN
PILLARS
AND
AROUND
THE
TANKS.

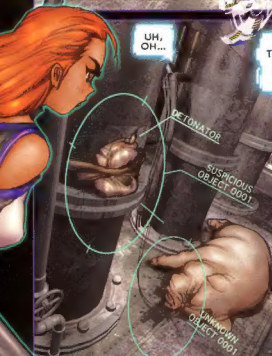


UH,
OH...

LOOKS LIKE
THE PIG'S GOT
THE BOMB
FUSE IN HIS
MOUTH.

IT
CERTAINLY
LOOKS
THAT WAY.

TAG
THAT
TOP
SECRET,
OKAY?



Strong blue frames around speech text
are a signal that compels recognition.
The intention is apparently to take
some temporary, emergency action,
and then do the real work later...

VZZZZ

IF ANY OF THE ANALYTICAL EQUIPMENT IN THE LAB SURVIVED, WE CAN USE IT TO CHECK THE CARCASSES. IF NOT, WE'LL HAVE TO REMOVE WHAT'S LEFT OF IT ANYWAY...

CRUDE "ACQUIRED" FROM THE LOCAL MILITARY...?

WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, CAN YOU GET A SAMPLE FROM THE PIG'S BRAIN?

THE CEBOTS WE'VE GOT ON SITE WON'T BE ABLE TO CUT OPEN THE SKULL.

WE MIGHT NOT LUCK OUT, BUT WHY NOT JUST SEARCH FOR A PIG WITH AN EXPOSED BRAIN...?

YES, GOOD IDEA.

I ERASED THE INFORMATION WHEN WE EVACUATED, BUT I INTEND TO PULVERIZE EVERYTHING WITH SATELLITE BOMBING BEFORE THE LOCAL POLICE ARRIVE AND START LOOTING.

I'LL DOWNLOAD YOU THE BOMBING SCHEDULE SO YOU CAN GET OUT SAFELY.

AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE WASTE PROCESSING YARD CONTAMINATING THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT?

CHECK OUT PAGE ECO-0187 OF THE ASSESSMENT DONE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION PLANS. IT'S WITHIN LIMITS.

THAT'S IT, THEN.

ROGER.

LOOKS LIKE THE
BASTARDS FROM
THE HLF DIDN'T
EVEN TOUCH THE
LITTLE DEVICE WE
PLANTED FOR
THEM

SO THE GOAL
OF THE ATTACK
WAS PURE
DESTRUCTION,
NOT LOOTING

MA AM? FROM
SURVEILLANCE CAM
IMAGES WE RETRIEVED,
WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO
IDENTIFY SOMEONE
WHO APPEARS TO BE
THE LEADER

GOOD
WORK,
BOYS!

LIM... WE
COULD DO
EVEN
BETTER
WORK IF
YOU'D
INCREASE
OUR
MEMORY
BANKS.

LATER, I'M
BUSY RIGHT
NOW

THEY'RE
SELLING
SIGNAL-EMIT-
TING E-BEAM
PANTS WITH
WATERPROOF
FOR ONLY
179.99!

LOOKING AT
THE
DETONATION
CONNECTIONS
MUST'VE
BEEN A MIX
OF RING AND
PARALLEL
DESIGNS ...

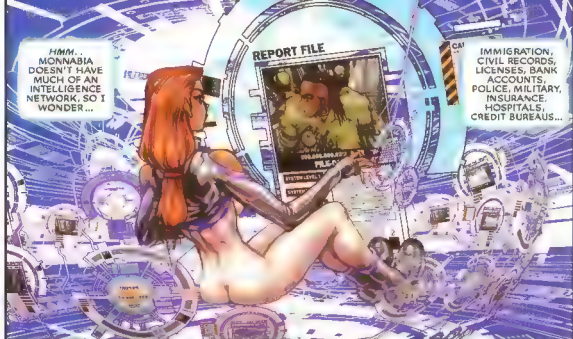
SO THIS IS THE
LEADER... SHE'S
SPOTTED THE
SURVEILLANCE
CAMERA...
HMM!

NO ATTEMPT
AT IMAGE
MANIPULATION
SO SHE
KNOWS WHAT
WE'RE DOING
AND IS
TRYING TO
LEAD US ON.

CAUTION!
ON PROTECTIO

ART FILE

POWER LEVEL 1
SYSTEM LEVEL 2
SYSTEM LEVEL 3
SYSTEM LEVEL 4



HMM...
MONNABIA
DOESN'T HAVE
MUCH OF AN
INTELLIGENCE
NETWORK, SO I
WONDER...

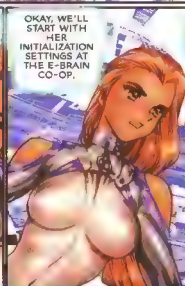
IMMIGRATION,
CIVIL RECORDS,
LICENSES, BANK
ACCOUNTS,
POLICE, MILITARY,
INSURANCE,
HOSPITALS,
CREDIT BUREAUS...

REPORT FILE



OKAY, HERE'S
A CANDIDATE...
WITH AN AI
SUPPORT
SYSTEM TOO
GOOD TO BE
FREE MARKET

JUST WHAT
I'M LOOKING
FOR.

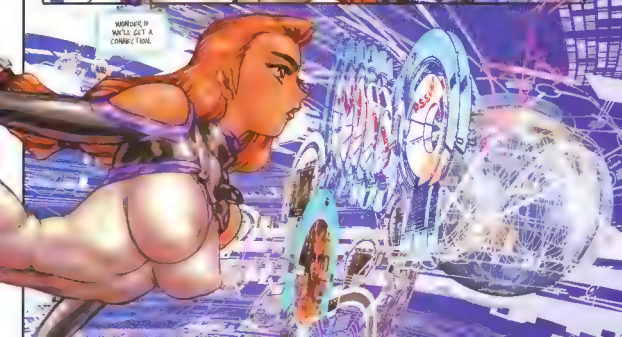


OKAY, WE'LL
START WITH
HER
INITIALIZATION
SETTINGS AT
THE E-BRAIN
CO-OP.



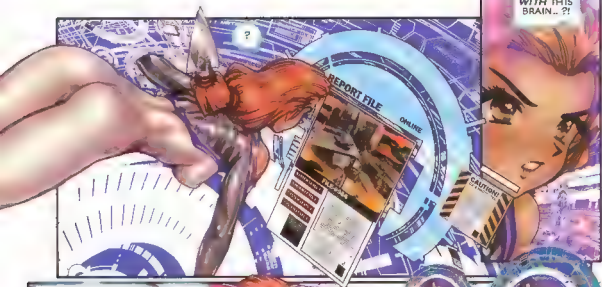
STAND BY
WITH FOUR
DECOYS, PLUS
C42 ANTI-
PROBE AND
C41 ANTI-
INTERCEPT
DEVICES

LOCKING
IN VPN
TUNNEL
ON SAT-12



WONDER IF
WE'LL GET A
CONNECTION.

WHAT'S
WITH THIS
BRAIN... ?!



DRUGS ALL OVER
THE PLACE...
CAN'T FIND A LINK
TO THE E-BRAIN
ACTIVITY.

IT'S A
DRUG
MAZE!

GOOD
THING
DIDN'T
GIVE IN
DEEP

NOW ANALYZING
BRAIN ACTIVITY...
ALKALOIDS SEEM TO
BE PRESENT... CENTRAL
NERVOUS SYSTEM
EXCITED... FIRST ORDER
GUESS IS **IBOGAINE**

REVERSE TRACE
DETECTED!
GETTING
RESPONSE FROM
SCANNING ROUTE
8, SAT-12!

RESPONSE
FROM
SCANNING
SAT-11 ...

IDENTIFYING
ORIGIN OF
SIGNAL...



IBOGAINE: Name of psychedelic substance derived from the roots of the iboga plant from Central West Africa. Not particularly effective in e-brain wars, but maybe just easy for these folks to obtain locally.



GOT A
RESPONSE
FROM
SCANNING
SAT-7.
SWITCHING TO
ROUTE C.

CONFIRMING
TARGET
COORDINATES.

GETTING
SCAN
RESPONSE
FROM
ROUTE C,
SAT-12!!



PRETTY FAST
FOR AUTO!
PLUG IN A
MAZE ON
ROUTE C, SAT-6
TO GAIN TIME.



CAN'T BELIEVE
THERE'S NO
RESTRAINING
MECHANISM!

ALL BARRIERS
PENETRATED...
INJECTING
VIRUS INTO
CORE
PROCESSES...

COPYING
PERIPHERAL
MEMORY TO
DECOY 4...



OKAY--
PULL ALL
CONNECTION
TRACES OUT
OF ENEMY
HARDWARE!

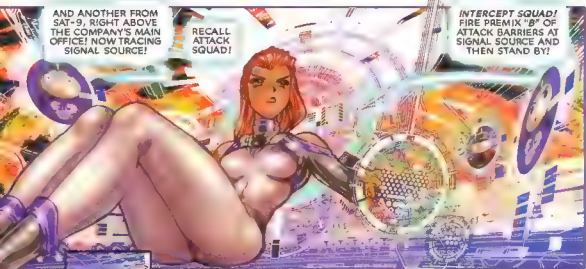
CONFIRMING
INCREASE IN
DRUGS
DETECTED...
YOU!

HOW COULD
THEY DO A
REVERSE
PROBE UNDER
THESE
CONDITIONS?!

WONDER IF WE
COULD USE THE
ORGANIZATION'S
DIRECTORY AND
JUMP TO
SOMEONE
ELSE'S BRAIN...?



WE HAVE
A SCAN
RESPONSE
FROM
ROUTE C,
SAT-8...



AND ANOTHER FROM SAT-9, RIGHT ABOVE THE COMPANY'S MAIN OFFICE! NOW TRACING SIGNAL SOURCE!

RECALL ATTACK SQUAD!

INTERCEPT SQUAD! FIRE PREMIX "B" OF ATTACK BARRIERS AT SIGNAL SOURCE AND THEN STAND BY!



PHEW!

ATTACK BARRIERS NOW NEUTRALIZED UP TO BLOCK 2 IF IT REACHES BLOCK 6, WE PLAN TO RECALL THEM



HOW FAR HAS THE ENEMY SCANNED?

FROM POSEIDON F TO THE J SECTOR RELAY.

THEY APPEAR TO HAVE UNLEASHED A 40-MEGA CLASS VIRUS.

A CONTAMINATION ALERT HAS BEEN ISSUED. WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE SAMPLE...?

SECURITY'S SEARCHING FOR THE SOURCE OF THE CONTAMINATION ALERT SIGNAL.

There really aren't any "data disks" like these floating in physical space. To Motoko's eyes (e-brain), it just "looks" like they are. Also, the reason her mouth isn't moving is because the conversations are all taking place at the e-brain level. In terms of timing, the enemy intervened with the satellite above the company's headquarters too soon (they should have intervened when the girl was convulsing under the neurotoxic effect of the hyperdose of Ilogaine), but that's because Motoko's neural drug strategy was more effective than they expected.

SEND MAIL
TO
ANDREW IN
ENGLAND.

TELL HIM WE
MAY HAVE
FOUND THE
HLF'S
WEAPONS
DEPOT, AND
ATTACH THIS
IMAGE FILE
WITH
COORDINATES.

WE'LL
NEED AN
INDEPENDENT
ANALYSIS
DONE ON
THE VIRUS
SAMPLE.

THIS IS THE
FIRST TIME THE
M-STRASS'S
NEURAL DRUG
SIDE BUSINESS
HAS BEEN
USEFUL IN
COMBAT, ISN'T
IT?

REPORT FILE

VR FILE
LEVEL
SY
IL 2
A

SO...THE GIRL
APPEARS TO
HAVE BEEN A
DECOY. AH,
AND THERE'S
AN OVERLAP
IN HER
MEMORY...!

IT LOOKS LIKE
SOMEONE AT SOME
POINT IN TIME INTER-
LEAVED MILITARY
EXPERIENCE AND
INTELLIGENCE DATA
INTO HER MEMORY
AND THEN HOOKED
HER UP WITH THE
HLF. OR MAYBE
SHE HAD ELEMENTS
OF IT FROM THE
BEGINNING...

ENEMY HAS
ENTERED
MAZE G8,
FOLLOWING
THE LINE'S
USAGE LOG.

BLOCK 8 OF
ATTACK
BARRIER HAS
BEEN
NEUTRALIZED

NOT
EXACTLY
TIMID,
ARE
THEY...?

WHAT'S
THE STATUS
ON THE
VIRUS
ANALYSIS?!

CURRENTLY
THEY'RE GOING
AFTER EACH
OTHER
FOURTEEN TYPES
NEUTRALIZED,
TWO IN
EVOLUTION, ONE
UNIDENTIFIED

The commander's past-memory file looks like a family picture album because for every memory unit written into her hard e-brain there's also a title and a preview file available for quick scanning.

"UNIDENTIFIED"...?

AT FIRST
GLANCE IT
APPEARS TO BE
INACTIVE AND
UNRESPONSIVE...
MAYBE A
DECOY?

USE THE
CONNECTORS
TO PREDICT THE
IDENTITY OF
THE PARTY
RESPONDING.
THESE THINGS
ARE USUALLY
COMBINATIONS OF
VARIOUS PARTS.

YOU'VE
GOTTA
USE YOUR
HEAD...!

OH...
YEAH!

CALL
FROM
SECRETARY
GRACE,
MISTRESS.

MR. ANTARES,
THE SPECIAL
COUNSEL
TO THE
PRESIDENT,
IS HERE,
MS. ARAMAKI.

I'M IN THE
MIDDLE OF
COMBAT WITH
SOME E-THUGS
RIGHT NOW, SO
PLEASE TELL
HIM POLITELY
THAT I CAN'T
MEET WITH HIM
UNLESS IT'S AN
EMERGENCY.

ALSO, WE'VE
RECEIVED A
COMPLAINT
FROM MR.
LEBRIS, ON
PAPER MEDIA.
IT'S NEARLY A
QUARTER-INCH
THICK, BUT
WE'RE
DIGITIZING IT
RIGHT NOW.

I SEE.
UNDER-
STOOD

AND, UM...
MOTOKO...?

GUY
NEVER
DOES
SEARCH

KCH

I HATE TO
ASK YOU
THIS NOW,
BUT...CAN I
TAKE SOME
TIME OFF?

WHAT...?

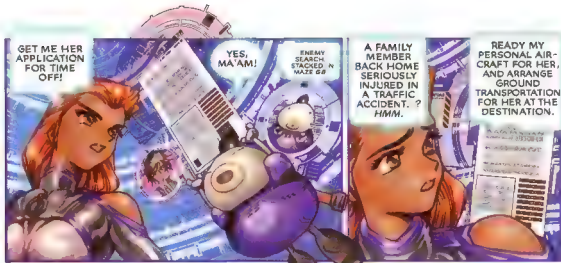
WE HAVE A
HIT SIGN ON
THE BLOCK 4
OF THE
ATTACK
BARRIERS AND
WE'VE LOST
THE
CONNECTION

TIME OFF,
GRACE?
SURE, BUT
I'M
SURPRISED.

HOLD OFF
ON
SEALING
THAT LOG!

ONLINE

The image of Grace the secretary indicates she's "online," but she's really not, technically. She's just connected via a desktop computer to the independent terminals in Motoko's subordinates; they indirectly see the images and transmit them to Motoko's brain via their own e-brains.



GET ME HER APPLICATION FOR TIME OFF!

YES, MA'AM!

ENERGY SEARCH STACKED N MAZE GB

A FAMILY MEMBER BACK HOME SERIOUSLY INJURED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT. ?
HMM.

READY MY PERSONAL AIRCRAFT FOR HER, AND ARRANGE GROUND TRANSPORTATION FOR HER AT THE DESTINATION.



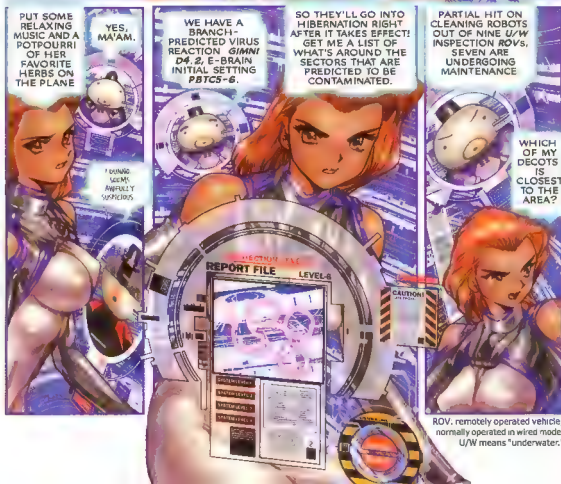
IS THIS ANOTHER TRICK?

AN ATTEMPT TO LURE YOU INTO SOMETHING LEWD...?

NO.

THE INFORMATION'S FORGED, AND THERE'S A POSSIBILITY OF TERRORISM DIRECTED AT ME. **VECTOR!** I WANT YOU TO ACCOMPANY AND GUARD HER. **XENON!** BACK THEM UP!

HOORAY! A TRIP!



PUT SOME RELAXING MUSIC AND A POTPOURRI OF HER FAVORITE HERBS ON THE PLANE

YES, MA'AM.

WE HAVE A BRANCH-PREDICTED VIRUS REACTION **GIMMI D4.2, E-BRAIN INITIAL SETTING PBTC5-6.**

SO THEY'LL GO INTO HIBERNATION RIGHT AFTER IT TAKES EFFECT! GET ME A LIST OF WHAT'S AROUND THE SECTORS THAT ARE PREDICTED TO BE CONTAMINATED.

PARTIAL HIT ON CLEANING ROBOTS OUT OF NINE U/W INSPECTION ROVS, SEVEN ARE UNDERGOING MAINTENANCE

WHICH OF MY DECOTS IS CLOSEST TO THE AREA?

REPORT FILE LEVEL-6

CAUTION! HIGH VOLTAGE

ROV. remotely operated vehicle, normally operated in wired mode
U/W means "underwater."

REPORT
E-DAMAGE TO
SECURITY, AND
MAKE SURE
WE'VE GOT ONE
OF THOSE ROVS
NAILED

YES,
MAAM!

DECOT
CLARICE IS
ACTIVATED
WITH
SYSTEM 8...

ALL
SUB-SPECIES
FROM BLOCK
4 DEPLOYED
ON DEFENSE
LINE...!

SET UP A STEALTH
COMBO VIRUS IN
BLOCK 6--ONE THAT
USES ANY FOUR
ANTIBODIES FROM
BLOCKS 1 TO 4.

THEN
ESTABLISH
A DEFENSE
LINE THERE.

??... EVEN
THOUGH
WE'VE GOT
A HIT ON
BLOCK 4?

DON'T BE
SO NATIVE!
THINGS
CHANGED!

SHOULD WE
COLLECT THE
ONES WE'VE
ALREADY
DEPLOYED...?

NO, NO! JUST
CONTINUE
PRETENDING
YOU'VE BEEN
TRICKED...!

FDD

MAIL BACK
FROM
ANDREW IN
ENGLAND,
CHECKED
AND
CLEARED.

THREE TRACE
BUOYS
ELIMINATED.

HAS A
HARD TIME
BEING
HONEST
ABOUT
THE JOY
HE FEELS,
DOESN'T
HE...?

AREN'T YOU
GOING TO LEAVE
THE INSPECTION
ROV WITH THE
SECURITY
DEPARTMENT?

REPORT FILE

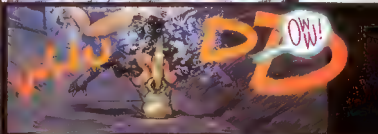
We've also been observing the Murakami case. There was a plan to change into the arms depot with K's armored suits, but we didn't have enough inside information. We re-evaluated our plans. As I believe you are a friend of our nation, the soldiers will not die in vain, although the intelligence officers may hate you. See you later.
An unavoidable comrade.

ACTIVATE
ALL C-CLASS
MAZES IN
CENTRAL
INFORMATION
CONTROL
AGENCY!

SET
SEQUENTIAL
F-4 MAZES
ON ALL
TERMINALS
WITHIN
TWENTY
METERS
OF THE
INSPECTION
ROVS!

A REAL
EMERGENCY
EH?

"Stealth Combo" virus: When an opponent uses antibodies to neutralize an attack barrier, they can be treated as components, combined, and then activated as a virus. Used alone they're harmless, and normally very tiny, with reproduction held to a minimum. As a result, it may be more accurate to describe them as prions—program fragments with "virus-like" traits.



Clarice is a decot, so compared to Motoko's body (which is made of titanium and carbon nanotube materials), Clarice's is extremely lightweight...but nonetheless considerably heavier than a human's, so she's not very well-suited for swimming. Motoko regrets not having had her land spread-eagled, so the water resistance would have slowed her down better.



Decots don't really breathe. There are bubbles coming out of Clarice's mouth because there was some air left in her body and it's leaking out.

ER...YOUR CLOTHES ARE CREATING TOO MUCH RESISTANCE. FOR MAXIMUM UNDERWATER SPEED, YOU OUGHT TO GET RID OF THEM

YOU WISH

THE EASIEST THING IS JUST TO FOLLOW THE PIPE

IGNORE THE Y AND, OF COURSE, IT'S FASTER TO MOVE ON LAND

HOW MANY MINUTES UNTIL I CATCH UP?

THIS IS TAKING ME TO THE BIO-ZONE.

APPROXIMATELY SEVEN MINUTES IN A STRAIGHT LINE BUT SINCE WE DON'T KNOW WHAT SORT OF COURSE THE TARGET HAS SELECTED, I'M ADDING A TWO-MINUTE BUFFER

I'M LINKING WITH THE PHYSICAL MAP OF THE COM-CABLE NETWORK. GO AHEAD AND ISSUE AN INFO EVAC ORDER FOR THE BIO-ZONE

HMM...THE INFO BARRIERS ARE REALLY HARDENED, SO I WONDER IF THEY'RE PLANNING TO PHYSICALLY JUMP OVER...?

DO THEY THINK THE SYSTEMS THAT FRAGILE INTERNALLY? I DOUBT IT... THEY MOVE LIKE THEY'VE CHECKED THINGS OUT PRETTY WELL BEFORE COMING HERE





WE'RE AT
THE LINE
ENTERING
THE
JUNCTION...

I'M
GOING
IN.

I'M SENDING
MY SENSORY
SIGNALS, SO
COME UP WITH
SOME WAY TO
TRACK THEM



YOU WANT A
REFLECTIVE
CALCULATION?
IT'LL BURN
BETTER!

LOOKS LIKE
THEY'RE
CONNECTING
DIRECTLY TO
THE CABLE...

SUPERIN-
TENDENT
LEBRIS!

AH...? ER.
IF YOU HAVE
A PROBLEM,
YOU'LL JUST
HAVE TO
CONTACT MY
SECRETARY--

SEPARATE
BUSINESS!
THERE'S AN ACT
OF INFOTERROR
BEING CARRIED
OUT RIGHT
BELOW YOUR
FACILITY. JUST
WANTED TO LET
YOU KNOW

UH
OH--YOU
JUST
WASTED
THREE
STROKES--

DAMN...
THIS
THING IS
GETTING
IN THE
WAY

Of course, there's no need for a "remotely controlled humanoid terminal" in every supermarket, but let's just say Nintendo's doing it OUT OF NECESSITY.



GOT A
CONTROL
REPORT ON THE
ROV YET?

JUST
GETTING A
REGULAR
CONTROL
PANEL.

DOING REVERSE
PROBE FOR THE LINE
THAT ACCESSES THE
CONTROL PANEL...
THREE RELAYS AND
THREE SATELLITES
IDENTIFIED SO FAR

OKAY
JUST
STAND BY
AS IS.

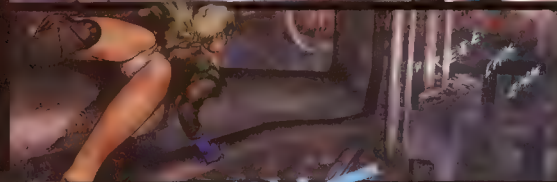
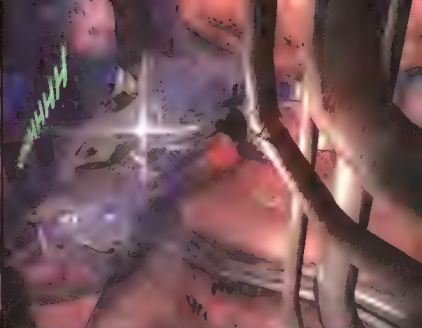
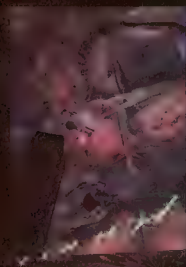
LOOKS LIKE
THEY'RE NOT
JUST USING
VIRUSES. I'M
SENDING YOU A
LIVE REPORT

NAVY DIVISION SUBMARINE GUARD SHIPS SLAVE-38 AND 40 HAVE
COMMENCED PAVES, ESTIMATED TIME TO CLARICE'S COORDINATES, BETWEEN 5-14
MINUTES AND 1-25 MINUTES. NOW ELECTRONICALLY INJECTING STEALTH VIRUSES,
AS WITH U/W WORK ROVS. TEN SECONDS TO OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS.

TARGETS ARE
DECELERATING

THIS IS THE SAME AREA
WHERE WE SANK THE
PIRATES THIS MORNING,
MISTRESS. AND THERE'S
BEEN A REPORT ON A CRACK
IN A DATA PIPE HERE.

I DON'T
LIKE THE
SOUND
OF
THIS....



WE CAN ONLY GET A RELIABLE TRACE TO THE SATELLITE WE RELAY THROUGH. THAT'S FACTORING IN ERRORS IN AREAS WHERE RECEPTION'S POSSIBLE.

THAT INCLUDES THE BORDER REGIONS OF GAVEL AND MONNABIA

MAYBE IT'S UNDER HERE... WONDER IF THERE'S A RELAY...?

DECRYPT COPIES OF THE "PANDORA 9" AND "TRASH BOX BOMB" VIRUSES.

I WANT YOU TO YANK THE HEADERS, SHRED THE PAYLOAD, AND MIX THEM INTO THE DAMAGED ROV REPORT!

HARDWARE'S SIMILAR, SO IT SHOULD BE HARD TO DETECT ANY TIME DIFFERENCE

IF THE READ-IN ERROR REPORTS ARE MERGED, WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO GET A GREAT HIT RATIO 'CAUSE THEY'LL BE ACTIVATED NO MATTER WHAT

OF COURSE IF IT ACTUALLY WORKS, WE'LL REALLY BE LUCKY

IF IT DOESN'T WORK WE SHOULD HAVE A HIT REPORT THAT'S NORMALLY NOT GENERATED COME BACK WITH THE TRICK BUILT IN.

IF THERE'S NOTHING, THAT'S IT. WE'LL JUST TEST THE VIRUSES, AND SECURITY WILL RETRIEVE THE ROV.

ER... LOOKS LIKE THE VIRUSES RELEASED BY THE ROVS HIT.

WHAT?!

THEY HADN'T EVACUATED ALREADY...?!
LEBRIS!!

FIRE HIM!
FIRE HIM!



DAMAGE STATUS..?

LOW CAPABILITY TO INFECT. uh oh!

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM IN THE WIRED PATH ON THE HARDWARE SIDE.

JUDGING FROM IMAGES AVAILABLE FROM THE WAREHOUSE, THEY'VE GOT 24 INFECTED CYBORGS GOING BERSERK.

SEEMS TO BE ALMOST NO EYE-JACK IMAGES.

ROBOTS AT THE VEHICLE PLANT HAVE STOPPED WORKING..

DRAIN VALVE #255 HAS MAL-FUNCTIONED..

SCAN LEBRIS' E-BRAIN!

ONE MOMENT, PLEASE..

UH, BARRIERS ARE OPERATING EFFECTIVELY, AND NOT INFECTED. DO YOU WANT TO INTERVENE DIRECTLY...?

NO. BRING E-LANCE UP TO THE SURFACE. FIND HER THE SHORTEST PATH BACK. AND CLOTHES.

YES, MA'AM!

GUESS WHAT? I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THAT ORDER! PRETTY SMART, HUM?!

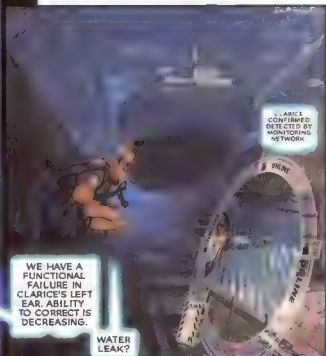
PRETTY OBVIOUS, I'D SAY!

AW, MA'AM!

EYE-JACK This refers to a system of hijacking the vision system of 100 randomly selected Poseidon e-brain workers and collecting information. In the case of workers that had e-brain operations done in Poseidon, "back door" access for Motoko has already been built into their nblai settings and hardware. This is something Motoko incorporated at the design stage (it's one of her jobs). It's a low-cost, low-risk solution compared to doing a brand new e-brain "jack". It's covered under the e-brain ethics law and illegal, of course, but the chances of Motoko being discovered are nearly zero.



NOW
INJECTING
ANTIBODIES
INTO
CYBORGS
AND THE
VEHICLE
PLANT
ROBOTICS



CLARICE
CONFIRMED
DETECTED BY
MONITORING
NETWORK

WE HAVE A
FUNCTIONAL
FAILURE IN
CLARICE'S LEFT
EAR. ABILITY TO
CORRECT IS
DECREASING.

WATER
LEAK?



HEAD
PROBLEM
IN INNER
EAR

THEN CLOSE
OFF THE
OUTER EAR.



NO ANTIBODY
EFFECT APPARENT.
CLOSEST CYBORG
TEN METERS TO
THE LEFT

INVESTIGATING
CAUSE

SENDING
SPECIFICS

WANT ME
TO INJECT
VIRUSES...?



NO LEAVE
IT UP TO
SECURITY

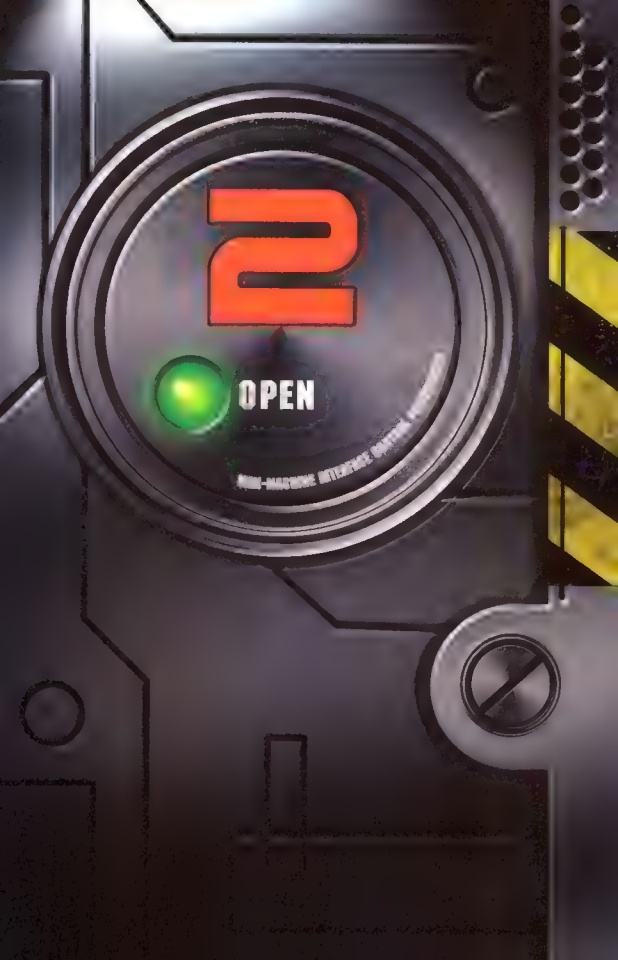
OH, DAMN
HE ALREADY
SAY YES

TO BE CONTINUED...

2

OPEN

MAN-MACHINE INTERFACE SYSTEM



INTERFACE

Send email comments to interface@milwaukie.com

Send snailmail comments to:

interface
c/o Dark Horse Comics
10956 SE Main St.
Milwaukie OR 97222

"Finally!"

I'm sure many of you produced a more or less similar response to the long-awaited — some might say endlessly-awaited — release of the English-language edition of *Ghost in the Shell 2: Man-Machine Interface*. But think of it on my end (yes, I'm bucking for sympathy). As editor I've been swimming in that pool every day for longer than I can remember, pulling my hair out, offering up incense to any deity who'd listen, hoping against hope that we could get this monster back up and running and working off before it, as we damn well know it would if we could only get it out of the tank.

"You know, I almost had to commit suicide just this morning."

— Masamune Shirow

In essence, the history of *Man-Machine Interface* has been a long and winding affair, over a decade passing from its initial serialization in Kodosha's flagship weekly, *Young Magazine*, to its eventual publication over here in the land of hamburgers and *Joe Millionaire*. The original *Ghost in the Shell* had already placed Masamune Shirow among the most innovative, forward-looking, and influential comics creators...well, ever. And we're not just talking about his pervasive influence in graphic fiction — I mean, Shirow's been copied so often and so heavily by so many comics artists that the vast majority of current action/adventure comics should be cutting him in on royalties — but you can hardly look around a shopping mall, watch a few hours of TV, play an electronic game, or go to the movies without seeing Shirow's footprints. And believe me, the more you look for them, the more you'll see them, and the more astonished you'll be at how much of our popular culture has been filtered through and reshaped by the imagination of one guy from Kobe.

But getting back to this *Ghost in the Shell* history business, the original series wound up in its run in *Young* and was then collected way back in 1991. Shirow began work on *Man-Machine Interface* not long after, but serialization appeared sporadically as Shirow's time was drawn off as he created work for art books (some as yet unpublished), animation projects, computer games, commercial illustration, etc. For some reason, Shirow was in demand!

So, sometime in early 1997, the *Man-Machine Interface* serialization finally ended, and the time came to collect the work. But along with the increasing thirst for Shirow's work outside comics, something else had happened over the intervening years between the alpha and omega of *MMI*'s serialization, something that would have a profound impact on the eventual *MMI* of record, not to mention a somewhat more-than-insignificant effect on when said version of record would actually hit the bookshelves of a comics shop near you. That "something" was Shirow's move into the world of digital imaging.

Prior to the Nineties, Shirow's color work had been executed with paints and brushes and the standard creative tools of the day. But by the early Nineties, computer enhancement began to creep in around the edges of Shirow's work — a moken sky here, a fabric texture there — and the race was on. Shirow's fascination with the limitless possibilities available to him became greater as each year passed. Digitally augmented paintings were gradually replaced by nearly pure digital visions, including mind-blowing 3-D modeling. The strength and vitality of Shirow's drawing was still there in spades, but cranked up to an unimagined level of finish, adding a dizzying, almost unsettling reality to what were clearly images of the imagination.

And as the artist's digital prowess shot off the charts, Shirow couldn't help but ponder aspects of his latest masterwork in anticipation of its impending collection. Tune-ups prior to collection releases are a common practice of manga authors, but something a bit more radical was in the offing, a rewriting so complete that it could more correctly be termed *metamorphosis*. The finished product would be as close to "stock" as Dale Jarret's NASCAR Ford Taurus is to the one year old drives. But nobody, not even Shirow himself, knew exactly where all this was headed when he first began work on the collection.

"As I worked along from day to day, there came a point when I had produced enough pages to publish the second book."

- Masamune Shirow

The first *Ghost in the Shell* had a few dozen color pages spread throughout its nearly 350 pages, endemic to the nature in which most manga are serialized, in large black-and-white anthologies with inserted color sections intended primarily for the sale of color ads. Manga with large amounts of color are almost unheard of, mostly limited to volumes of frame-captured adaptations of popular anime features. So when Shirow embarked on the creative journey to re-imagine *Man-Machine Interface*, he was sailing into uncharted waters. No one in Japan had ever done what he was about to do. In fact, one could argue that no author of graphic fiction in *any* country has. Ever. Most creators are content to slap the original material between stiff covers and start collecting royalties ASAP, but Shirow had other ideas.

And so, *Man-Machine Interface* ended its serialization. Shirow began his remodeling project, and a 1998 release of the collection was announced. Shirow's publisher and fans eagerly anticipated the collection's release, and as marketing began to ramp up, the buzz grew. But then the date for publication passed. A new publication date was set. And passed. Finally, in December of 2000 the jaw-dropping, limited-edition *Solid Box* was released, complete with toy, booklets, poster, and beautiful hardcover editions of both *Koukaku Kidoutai* volumes. And when readers cracked the cover of *Man-Machine Interface*, they were floored. Shirow had added over 150 pages of new material, all rendered in stunning 3-D digital color. At long last, Shirow's magnum opus was finished.

Well, almost...

There were still a few tweaks and twists that Shirow had in mind before the *final*, official release of *MMI*. A year approached. And passed. Websites hummed, message boards growled, industry types experienced stomach pains. What was Shirow *doing*?

Finally, finally, in June of 2001, the work was delivered. Again, Shirow had done a bit more than just take a last-minute look under the hood and polish a fingerprint off the windshield. Pages had been removed and new pages substituted. Colors and lettering had been readjusted just for the paperback edition, printed smaller and on a different paper than the hardcover. More story notes had been added. And last, but hardly least, Shirow had created an eye-popping twenty-four page epilogue, giving readers' slapped-around brains one more trip through the blender. *Now* he was done.

Well, with the Japanese edition, anyway...

The time had come to "Westernize" *MMI*. For those unfamiliar with the process, keep in mind that Japanese is read right-to-left, and (for culture-deprived Yanks) that means the back of the book here is the front of the book there, with the panels flowing in reverse to those in the West. Typically, Westernizing isn't all that complex: reverse the pages, plug in the dialogue, and retouch the sound effects. With *Man-Machine Interface*, though, it's an entirely different ballgame. One look at the original will show that almost every page has English graphics in floating holographic displays, stenciled on the sides of submarines, printed on signage hanging from chain-link fences. English is *everywhere*, and straightforward mirror-imaging of the art just wouldn't work, not without leaving tens of thousands of readers in the West turning their heads to the side and getting that look your dog gets sometimes. And retouching this kind of work, from digital files so complex that even an experienced Photoshop gunslinger would break out in a cold sweat, couldn't be left to just anybody.

And so, Shirow had a bit more work to do...

A lot more work, actually, an amount that can only properly be appreciated when comparing the Kodansha collection against the DH comics. In fact, Shirow's level of involvement with the Westernizing of this series is unprecedented, and it isn't as though he doesn't have anything else on his plate. Shirow's commitment is total and uncompromising, and *Man-Machine Interface* is what it is because of that commitment. And all of us get to reap the considerable benefits.

Now, that's worth waiting for, right? I thought so.

"I would also like to thank the people, who have waited for 10 years. Thank you so much."

- Masamune Shirow

Hey, thank you!



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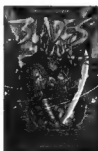
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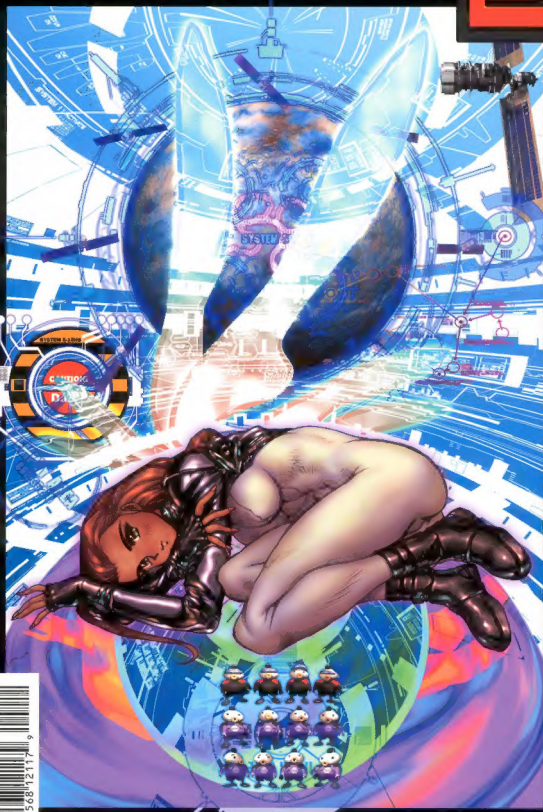


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